

# Volunteer Vision

Monthly Newsletter of the City of Eau Claire Volunteers



**Teri-Gene Conlin, Volunteer Coordinator**  
Teri-Gene.Conlin@eauclairewi.gov/715-839-8285

## Coordinator's Corner

It seems like summer flew by this year. The kids are back to school and fall will be officially here on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Though September is a quiet month for events in the City of Eau Claire for which we require volunteers, we are using this time to prepare for the next major event scheduled on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, **Make A Difference Day Eau Claire**. This will be the first year the city has joined USA Today's national event, Make A Difference Day, the largest day of volunteering in the nation.

**Make A Difference Day Eau Claire** will require many volunteers. We already have had some commitments for volunteers, but we need more. That day, we will be cleaning the areas in the city, delivering blankets made in Operation Blanket Eau Claire and helping citizens who need some assistance ready their homes for winter. At Boyd Park that day, we will be making cards for the inpatients at Mayo Health Systems Eau Claire as well as collecting non-perishable food items for the Feed My People Food Bank.

This is going to be a wonderful event, please consider joining us that day. Contact me for more information and a registration form.

Enjoy the first few days of fall!

With regards,  
*Teri-Gene*

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

### GLOW RIDE

The Recreation Department is looking for volunteers to help out with a new event on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Glow Ride. This event is for all Eau Claire cyclists, bicyclists and tricyclists to join us for a leisurely evening glow-in-the-dark ride across Eau Claire. The ride will start at 8PM at the Hobbs Ice Center Parking Lot, so we are asking our volunteers to be arriving at 6:30PM for course set up. Volunteers are needed to direct riders throughout the course and then assist with race clean up when it's done. Please feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

### PRIMETIMES

The Fall/Winter 2015-2016 Primetimes is now available online at [www.eauclairewi.gov/primetimes](http://www.eauclairewi.gov/primetimes).

### RX PARK PAGES

The Recreation Department believes that getting out and experiencing the parks can have huge health benefits! Parks are a prescription to Live Life Better. These publications will show what each of our parks has to offer you! For more information, follow this link below:

<http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/recreation-services/parks/pavilions-shelters/park-information-pages>.

## ***The following article comes from the U.S. News eBook, [How to Live to 100](#).***

Helping our fellow man has long been seen as an altruistic behavioral model. But it turns out that more selfish motives—pleasing friends, doing what you want—are more successful causes of effective volunteering. Whatever the motive, volunteering improves the health, happiness, and in some cases, the longevity of volunteers. Children who volunteer are more likely to grow up to be adults who volunteer. Even unwilling children who are forced to volunteer fare better than kids who don't volunteer. And in a virtuous circle, communities with lots of volunteers are more stable and better places to live, which in turn further boosts volunteerism.

[See the [Top 10 U.S. Cities for Well-Being](#).]

"On one hand, it's striking that volunteering even occurs," says Mark Snyder, a psychologist and head of the Center for the Study of the Individual and Society at the University of Minnesota. "It seems to run against the strong dynamics of self-interest. There is simply nothing in society that says that someone is mandated to help anyone else." Yet 1 in 3 adults do meaningful volunteer work on a sustained basis, he notes, and the United States has one of the world's highest rates of volunteerism.

"People who volunteer tend to have higher self-esteem, psychological well-being, and happiness," Snyder says. "All of these things go up as their feelings of social connectedness goes up, which in reality, it does. It also improves their health and even their longevity."

Among teenagers, even at-risk children who volunteer reap big benefits, according to research findings studied by Jane Allyn Piliavin, a retired University of Wisconsin sociologist. She cites a positive effect on grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward education. Volunteering also led to reduced drug use and huge declines in dropout rates and teen pregnancies.

Other research links youth volunteering to a higher quality of life as an adult, Piliavin adds. "Participating in high school tends to boost participating in adulthood, which is related to enhanced well-being." One clear message from this for parents: Get your children involved in community volunteer programs.

Most people say they value volunteering because it's "the right thing to do," among other altruistic reasons. But the strongest drivers of successful volunteers are actually more self-focused, notes Allen Omoto, a professor of psychology at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif. There are five main reasons people volunteer, he says.

Three are "self-focused":

1. Understanding: the desire to learn new things and acquire knowledge.
2. Esteem enhancement: feeling better about yourself and finding greater stability in life.
3. Personal development: acquiring new skills, testing your capabilities, and stretching yourself.

Two are "other-focused":

4. Sense of community: making the world, or your piece of it, better.
5. Humanitarian values: serving and helping others, often with a strong religious component.

"The ones that get the higher rates of endorsement are the 'other focused' ones," Omoto says. "But it's the 'self-focused' ones that predict length of service." Snyder also says people who don't volunteer often have an idealized view of people who do. "They put them up on a pedestal," he says. This might actually deter people from volunteering because they feel they don't measure up.

The benefits of volunteering are linked to a person's degree of commitment. "It's clear that more is better, at least up a point," Piliavin says. "Some studies find an inflection point and others don't. One study finds the benefits increase up to the point where a person has volunteered 100 hours during a year." Consistency is also important. "The more consistently you do it, the better your psychology benefits," she says.

[See [The Secret to a Long and Happy Life](#).]

Snyder says the amount of volunteering people do tends to rise steadily during their adult years and begins declining at about the age of 60. Interestingly, the benefits of volunteering rise for older people, and experts say they might benefit from more volunteer work, not less.



**USA TODAY**  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

# **EAU CLAIRE**

On one day each year, USA Today wants to inspire the nation to make a difference.  
Make A Difference Day is the largest single-day of volunteering in the country.

**Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**9AM-1PM**

**Volunteer celebration to follow at  
Boyd Park with food and raffle prizes**

**Please bring a non-perishable food item with you if possible**

**Here in Eau Claire, we will be:**

- **Cleaning up our city's parks and trails**
- **Helping our elderly citizens ready their homes for winter**
- **Creating cards for inpatients at Mayo Health Systems Eau Claire (at Boyd Park)**
- **Collecting non-perishable food items for Feed My People Food Bank (at Boyd Park)**
- **Delivering blankets to local agencies made during Operation Blanket Eau Claire**

**For questions, contact the City of Eau Claire's Volunteer Coordinator at  
[Teri-Gene.Conlin@eauclairewi.gov](mailto:Teri-Gene.Conlin@eauclairewi.gov) or call 715-839-8285.**

**Volunteer registration forms may be found at  
<http://eauclairewi.gov/departments/recreation-services/parks/volunteers>**